

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (Business) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Business)	Executive Cabinet	13.11.08

## CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE AUDIT AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To summarise the main contents of the Chorley Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To endorse the Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy as a guide to future town centre interventions
3. To adopt the 10 objectives and approve the related projects as set out in the Implementation Timetable, subject to a review of the medium term financial strategy and agreement of the budget for 2009/10.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. Chorley Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy envisages Chorley as a vibrant, diverse, sustainable, accessible and attractive place. It highlights the opportunities and challenges for Chorley Town Centre and recommends a number of Urban Design Objectives, and associated projects and implementation processes as a means to realise this vision.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

#### (If the recommendations are accepted)

5. This project directly supports the Corporate Strategy and the achievement of our strategic objective to put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region
6. Priorities for investment in Chorley Town Centre have evolved from the Chorley Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan and have been given further consideration in the Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy.\*

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. None

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region	√	Develop local solutions to climate change.	√
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	√	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	√
Involving people in their communities	√	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

## BACKGROUND

9. Chorley Economic Regeneration Strategy focuses on the town centre as an important part of the economy of the Borough as a whole. Further, the retail study by White Young Green identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the town centre. The Chorley Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan was prepared to ensure a strategic approach and a co-ordinated plan of action to drive forward the vitality and viability of Chorley Town Centre, and keep a pace with neighbouring town centres. The Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy highlights the opportunities and challenges for Chorley Town Centre and recommends a number of Urban Design Objectives and associated projects and implementation processes as a means to realise the vision.
10. The Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy was selected by the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel as a key piece of work to monitor the delivery of the Town Centre Strategy. The Panel has provided valuable input into the entire process which included a visit to St Helens Town Centre to learn about their award winning George Street Quarter improvement/regeneration scheme which was based on their audit/design process.

## CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE AUDIT AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

11. Chorley Town Centre Audit was undertaken in the winter/spring 2007-08 by Landscape Projects, Landscape Architects and Urban Designers based in Manchester. The Audit set out to establish a snapshot survey of the public realm and townscape of Chorley Town Centre, and included desktop and site surveys, workshop events and a 'Placecheck' public consultation event.
12. The Audit identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Town Centre Public Realm and recommended ways in which these issues might be enhanced or addressed.
13. The recommendations and guidance as contained in the Audit then formed the basis for the Urban Design Strategy, which sets out ten objectives, which, if implemented, will result in a much improved town centre.
14. Two broad objectives are **(1) to make Chorley THE contemporary market town in the North West**, and **(2) to make Chorley the vibrant heart of the Borough**. To realise these the strategy proposes projects to encourage an atmosphere of bustle and friendliness in a high quality environment that combines traditional values with a modern public realm that includes places to meet, exchange and be cheerful. Key

actions under these objectives include developing Chorley's cultural offer, adopting a market town design guide, and continuing to market the town.

15. There are four town wide objectives intended to create a diverse and sustainable town centre. These are; **(3) to promote mixed use development** on sites such as Market Walk Phase 2, QS Fashions, and Gillibrand Street, and bringing accommodation above shops into productive use, **(4) to revitalise Chorley's built heritage** by improving listed buildings and their setting, lighting features such as St Mary's Arch, and improving shopfronts, **(5) to reveal the town centre** by way of improved signage, links and gateways, and **(6) to make Chorley a walkable town centre**, by improving the pedestrian environment and exploring the potential to develop a network of tranquil greenspaces.
16. Following on from these are four specific projects. The first of which is **(7) to make Market Street a thriving street again**. Anticipated interventions include enhancing, widening and de-cluttering footways, exploring the potential for tree planning, increasing the frequency of markets, and encouraging the development of street cafes and displays to bring life and activity to Market Street. The three other projects include **(8) improving Chorley Markets** (which is already underway with the Markets Improvement Scheme), **(9) improving the Ringroad**, and **(10) creating a Civic Quarter for Chorley**, centred around the Town Hall.
17. The evolution of this Strategy has involved extensive consultations which included workshops, a 'Placecheck' public consultation event, Council interdepartmental consultations, and consultations/workshops with; Economic Regeneration Group, Town Centre Workshop, Town Centre Working Party, Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The results of these consultations have shaped the final document.
18. The Strategy is not about bluesky thinking and major development schemes, which would prove unrealistic. Rather, it represents the views of all those consulted during the process and promotes a piecemeal approach that builds on the qualities of Chorley Town Centre. It seeks to pull together the range of initiatives already underway in the Town Centre and coordinate the actions of the Council and all those with an interest in the town centre in order to realise these objectives over the next five years and beyond (note Implementation Timetable). The Strategy will also give a useful evidence base to support applications for external funding.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

19. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	√
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

## COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY & PERFORMANCE)

20. We will need to ensure that a new scheme on Market Street is accessible to people with mobility impairments and covers the needs of all our communities, e.g appropriate seating etc. It is understood that there will be a number of further opportunities to consult with our communities as the scheme develops and the newly established Equality Forum will enable us to consult with representatives from all the communities covered by our Equality Scheme.

## COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION)

21. The Council has signalled its intent to progress this work through including a provision of just over £1m in its Capital Programme for the next the next three years. I have, however, previously reported the downturn in expected Capital receipts as a result of mainly the reduction in former Council house sales. This means the total resources available for Capital spending are expected to reduce over the three year period. As such it is appropriate to review the Capital Programme as part of the budget cycle for 2009/10 to ensure the Council's plan is still affordable.

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Chorley Economic Regeneration Strategy ***	March 2006***		Council Website
White Young Green 'Chorley Town Centre, Retail and Leisure Study	October 2005	***	Council Website
Chorley Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan	2007		Council Website
Chorley Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy	July 2008		Attached ***

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Peter McAnespie	5286	23 Jul. 08	***